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CONVERSATION WITH A PRO

Rick Hill

So you dug my little thing on Apartheid
and now you wanna know what makes poems
matter.
Nice gig, poetry.
No big bucks,
but grants and fellowships bring in the groceries,
and outguessing the weenies
who edit those piss-ant quarterlies
pulls down some pocket change.
Hey, I got it wired:
this season Revolution's back, also naughty science.
Odes to your cock are out,
but paens to pussies that taste like citrus
still go if you use a fake name, like Falana, say,
and send em to those flaky fem rags.
If that don't fetch em,
surreal puttin-it-in-there with black chick/dude
ditties,
or my-brother-the-tree yawners will.
Suicide and Depression? Bread and butter.
Funny though,
old homeboy of mine pulled the ripcord last month;
sliced his wrists and strung himself from the ceiling,
but I still haven't covered it.
Didn't even read my latest at his sendoff.
He was a poet too—
or thought he was.
I knew his stuff stank, but
I told him, "What the fuck, Ace, mail it off,
the weenies might bite.

If you don't sell yourself,
 you're just jackin off.
 But first cut the shit out of it;
 it reads like the fuckin Encyclopedia Brittanica
 now!"

But fools keep foolin:
 he kept bleedin out nothin but
 five-page double-column love-rapture
 celebration-of-nature crap that woulda
 gave Walt Whitman a hard-on plus,
 when he knew well as me that nobody
 from bigshit conference guru
 to jerkwater college pulp dink
 wants to look at more than sixty-five lines.
 The chump even used rhymes sometimes!
 Lame, lame, really LAME.

No gumption to ode up a grant,
 poeticize a food stamp app,
 or butt-kiss unemployment clerks—
 a little too poetic to live, yep,
 another dead fuckin
 loser.

But hey, you're buyin,
 don't wanna bum you out!
 Check my new Nicaragua haiku, here.
 Still gotta slick it up some . . .
 maybe a Spanish title.

Got the hook when Viet-Nam was happening,
 but who gives a shit about 'Nam now,
 cept maybe some boo-hoo veteran rags,
 but they don't pay nothin—
 gotta split? Aw, only takes a couple—
 ok, ok. Catch you later.
 Thanks for the vino,
 Asshole.